

Carignan

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BACKGROUND

Carignan (kah-ree-NYAHN) is a very old variety, probably originating in Aragon, north-east Spain, where it is known as Mazuela (the preferred international synonym of this variety). Because it has been widely dispersed in southern Europe, it has many synonyms including Bovale di Spagna, Bovale Grande (Sardinia), Bovale Mannu, Carignane (France), Cariñano, Cariñena and Mazuela (Spain).

Global area in 2010 was 80,178ha (32% less than 2000). More than two-thirds is grown in France, mainly in Languedoc-Roussillon, but the area has more than halved since 2000. It is often blended with Syrah, Grenache and Mourvedre.

In Spain (with just 6% of global area), it is mainly grown in Aragon and authorised in the Rioja blend. In Italy it is mainly found in Sardinia. In Algeria and Tunisia (both 9% of global) it is very important. There are small areas in Croatia, Cyprus, Turkey, USA (California) and Chile.

The planted area and number of wine producers who use Carignan in Australia is unknown. There are at least 22 wine producers who claim to use Carignan (of which 12 are in the Barossa Valley with the remainder in McLaren

Vale, Victoria and Western Australia). In South Australia, any 'Carignan' planted before 1966 (or propagated from vines planted before 1966) is likely to be Paraletta (syn. Bonvedro) or even Mourvedre (refer to Dry and Dry (2014) for more information on this topic).

VITICULTURE

Budburst is late and maturity is very late. Vigour is high with erect growth habit. Bunches are large and compact with medium berries. Yield is high. Spur pruning is generally used in Australia and elsewhere. It is very susceptible to oidium but more tolerant of downy mildew and bunch rot. It is difficult to mechanically harvest due to tight attachment of bunches.

WINE

There are differing opinions regarding the quality of Carignan wines, which generally have moderate colour, high acidity, tough tannins and tend to lack pronounced varietal characters. Carbonic maceration is used in France to soften tannins.

REFERENCE

Dry, P. and Dry, N. (2014) Carignan – the unmasking of an imposter. *Wine Vitic. J.* 29 (4):49-52.

For further information on this and other emerging varieties, contact Marcel Essling at the AWRI (marcel.essling@awri.com.au or 08 8313 6600) to arrange the presentation of the Alternative Varieties Research to Practice program in your region.